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DeKalb County Government
Sycamore, Illinois

**Highway Committee Minutes
January 6, 2022**

A public meeting of the Highway Committee of the DeKalb County Board was held on Thursday, January 6, 2022, at 6:00pm.

Vice Chairman Luebke called the meeting to order at 6:00pm and called for the roll. Committee members present were Mr. Deutsch, Ms. Emmer, and Mr. Osland. Motion made by Ms. Emmer and seconded by Mr. Deutsch to allow Mr. Plote and Ms. Willis to join the meeting remotely via Zoom due to current illness. Motion passed unanimously. Ms. Jones was absent. The County Engineer, Mr. Nathan Schwartz and Mr. Wayne Davey, Support Services Manager were also present.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Motion made by Mr. Osland and seconded by Mr. Deutsch to approve the agenda as presented. The County Engineer explained as of two weeks ago, the Department was expecting to get a bid from Peterbilt and CIT. We were informed just prior to the bid deadline that Peterbilt could not provide any quotes for another couple of months due to truck availability. Delivery still remains unknown. CIT submitted a bid for a Kenworth but has no idea when it will be delivered – expect it in the next 2-3 years. Yesterday, CIT found out from their corporate office that they could submit a bid for a Mack, as they are expecting to have six units available. However, all of those would most likely be spoken for in the next 30 days. Expected delivery for the Mack truck would be late fall of this year. This Department will rebid this piece of equipment, allowing Peterbilt to try harder to find a truck and allow CIT to submit a bid for a cab and chassis to be delivered during 2022. That bid opening would be held on January 19, 2022, the day of the County Board meeting. A special highway committee meeting would be needed immediately before the county board meeting (6:30 pm), to approve the recommended award resolution. Therefore, item two should be removed from tonight's agenda. **Mr. Deutsch moved to remove item two and was seconded by Ms. Emmer. Motion passed unanimously. Motion to approve the agenda as amended passed unanimously.**

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Mr. Osland moved and Ms. Emmer seconded a motion to approve the minutes of the regular November 4, 2021 meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: None

**ORDINANCE #O2022-01: ALTERED SPEED ZONE ON PLEASANT HILL ROAD
2,730 FEET NORTH OF ILLINOIS ROUTE 72, CONTINUING NORTH FOR 1,350
FEET**

Citizens along Pleasant Hill Road had contacted the Highway Commissioner for Kingston Road District to inquire into lowering the speed limit on a portion of Pleasant Hill Road. Their concern lies where there are several houses that enter and exit onto Pleasant Hill Road at the stated location. The Highway Commissioner requested the County Engineer review this section of roadway for compliance with 625 ILCS 5/1-172 to see if any portion could be designated as a residence district for the purposes of an altered speed zone. After analyzing this section of roadway, it was determined that section met the requirements of being at least a quarter of a mile long with residences or residences and buildings in use for businesses spaced no more than 500 feet apart. Mr. Schwartz determined a speed of 45mph was appropriate for this zone and recommended the Committee forward the proposed Ordinance to the full County Board recommending approval. The Kingston Highway Commissioner also concurred with the County Engineer's recommendation. **Mr. Deutsch moved and Mr. Osland seconded a motion to forward the ordinance to the full County Board recommending approval. Motion passed unanimously.**

ANNUAL BRIDGE INSPECTIONS:

At the end of 2021, Mr. Jerry Busse retired from the County after 40 years of employment. As you are aware, Mr. Busse inspected all the county, township, and municipal bridges, except within the jurisdiction of the City of DeKalb. The County did not charge the townships or municipalities for this service. Most structures are inspected every two years. A few are inspected every four years while a small handful are inspected on a more frequent basis.

Five years ago, the idea was discussed of each public agency paying for the Inspector's time, either partially or completely. The Highway Committee recommended the County continue to pay for the services and not charge our local agencies. Part of the reasoning was because the work was being performed in-house and not by a consultant. In-house work is done by an employee and the County pays for their time anyway. A consultant would require a separate payment above and beyond the normal payroll.

While Mr. Schwartz would like to do the inspections using our own employees, that option is not available for the foreseeable future. This Department is planning to hire a consultant for January & February to complete those inspections that are due during those months. In the meanwhile, the County will go through the QBS process to select a consultant to perform the remainder of the 2022 inspections. Any unscheduled inspections, such as for new developments, road use agreements or for potential damage due to illegal overweight loads, are anticipated to be done in-house.

In view of the recommendation five years ago, we have considered passing along the costs to the local agencies who own the bridges which get inspected. Similar to bridge construction projects, the county is looking at the option of using its bridge funds to match the township funds for the inspections. If this works out, the County would split the cost of the inspections 50/50 with the townships.

As the township highway commissioners were told on Tuesday, the discussion is only being introduced in January. No decision is being requested until the February Highway Committee meeting. That will allow time to get some estimated costs from consultants, to determine how many structures in each year every township has scheduled, and determine which bridges are on a township line and how those costs will be split. During a preliminary discussion with administration and leadership, it was recommended to phase in the new costs over time. Possibly, the county could pay 100% in 2022, split the costs 75%-25% in 2023, and go 50%-50% in 2024 and after. This would allow the townships and municipalities a little more time to prepare for the costs associated with their own structures. It was concurred that this would be a better option rather than just passing along the costs right away.

Some of the questions from the townships included - How the unplanned inspections would be handled; If the county would still complete drainage studies at no cost to determine pipe culvert sizes; and if the county would still perform special inspections for pipe culverts and other structures that are not inspected every two years per federal requirements. The answer to each question is yes, the County will still perform those at no charge.

CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS: Vice Chairman Luebke stated he had no comments at this time and asked Mr. Plote if he had anything to share. Chairman Plote commented on the first two snow storms that hit the County and stated things seems to have gone smoothly. Covid did attack the plow drivers but those with mild to no symptoms were able to quarantine in their plow trucks and continue with their snow removal duties.

COUNTY ENGINEER'S COMMENTS:

The transportation improvement progress report was reviewed with the Committee.

- New Lebanon Road bridge replacement will begin in the spring after being rebid. The new bid for construction was \$456,936.
- Peace Road Bridge widening engineering is moving ahead and stands at 20% complete.
- Plank Road Study is moving ahead with the ESR now complete. This project stands at 25% complete.
- Suydam Road Bridge replacement is now 100% completed and the road back open to traffic.
- Twombly Road upgrade is also now 100% completed.

The Department currently has several job vacancies. To help with the job vacancies, Mr. Schwartz has rented a table at NIU's spring job fair in February to actively search out new employees. Furthermore, the Highway Department is sharing the table with other County departments that are interested in recruiting new employees for their own vacancies. For the Highway vacancies, there was already an opening for an engineering technician. Multiple applications have been received but none with any experience. The most promising application was from a new graduate with a degree in mechanical engineering. He has not been interviewed yet. As mentioned earlier, the bridge inspector just retired. The fulltime DSATS employee left six weeks ago to follow his wife and her career. Even though that leaves the County Engineer acting as the DSATS Director as the only DSATS employee, Mr. Wayne Davey helps a lot with the paperwork. Further, DSATS is not actively working on any projects so Mr. Schwartz's time committed to DSATS is at a minimum. Compared to when the city was the lead agency of DSATS, Mr. Schwartz is actually spending less time each month on DSATS. This is attributed to less meetings, more efficient paperwork and meetings, and much, much shorter planning documents and reports without all the errors than when it was under the city's oversight. Despite taking less time for DSATS, Mr. Schwartz is spending more time for overall duties as we have had an influx of larger site development permits over the past 2-3 years and the IEPA is requiring more inspections and paperwork for the County's MS4 responsibilities. Additionally, it was covered during the November Highway Committee meeting how the amount of DSATS construction dollars are more evenly spread to different agencies, particularly the County.

For a legislative update, as a part of the State's capital program in 2019, each local agencies got a bonding component of the RBI funds in addition to their MFT monthly payments. There was scheduled to be six installments over three years. Everyone has received four of the six payments. We expect the fifth payment to be distributed in early spring and the final payment during the fall.

In Washington, the nation finally saw a new federal capital program. While the details are being interpreted, it appears the existing funding levels won't change too much. Rather, the bulk of the new funding goes to new programs. We hope a significant portion of the new funding goes to address deficient bridges.

ADJOURNMENT: Vice Chairman Luebke reminded everyone that the special highway Committee meeting will be held on January 19, 2022 at 6:30pm in the Freedom Room if needed. He then asked if there was any additional items that needed to be presented tonight and hearing none asked for a motion to adjourn. **A motion was made by Mr. Plote, seconded by Ms. Willis and passed unanimously.** The meeting was adjourned at 7:05pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jim Luebke
Vice Chairman